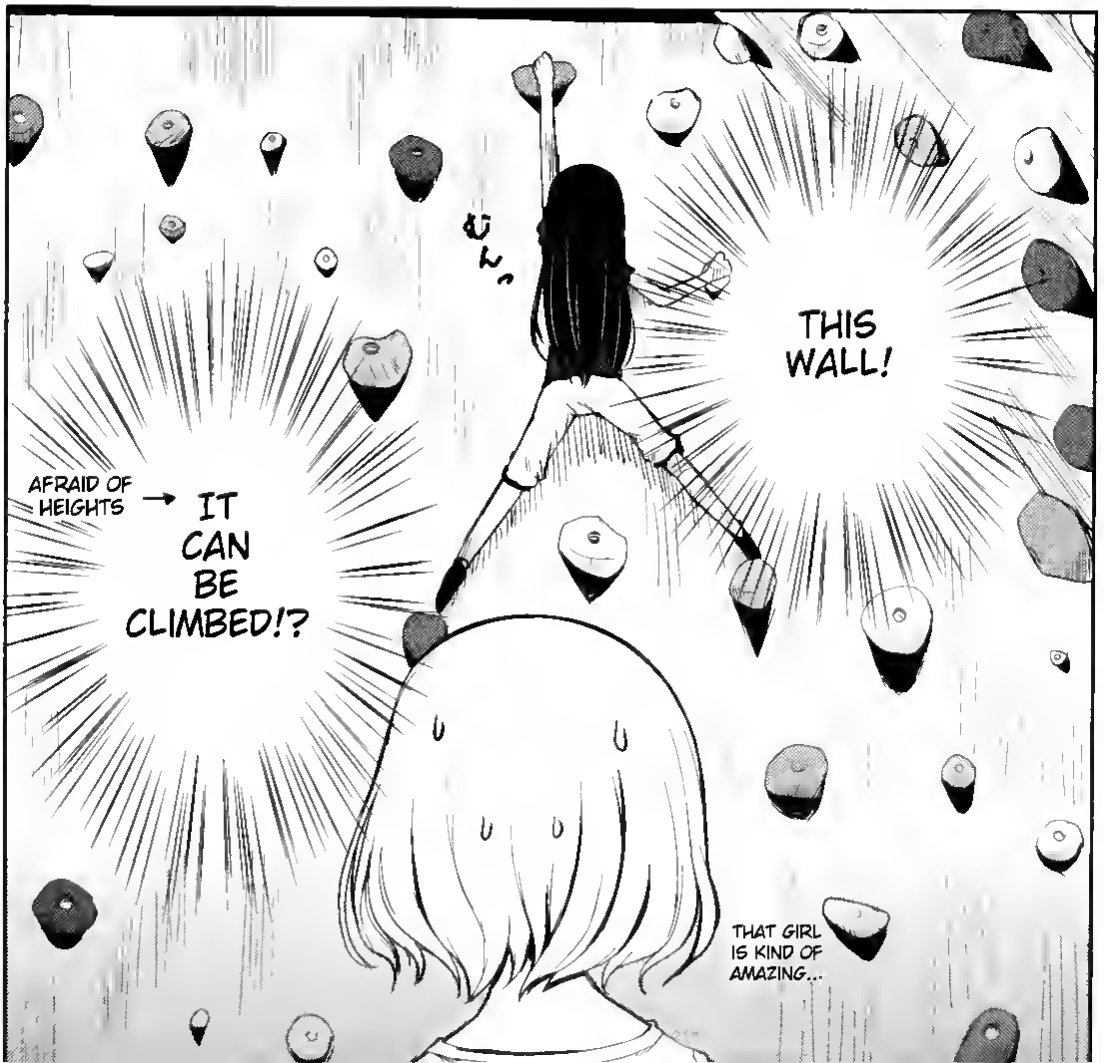
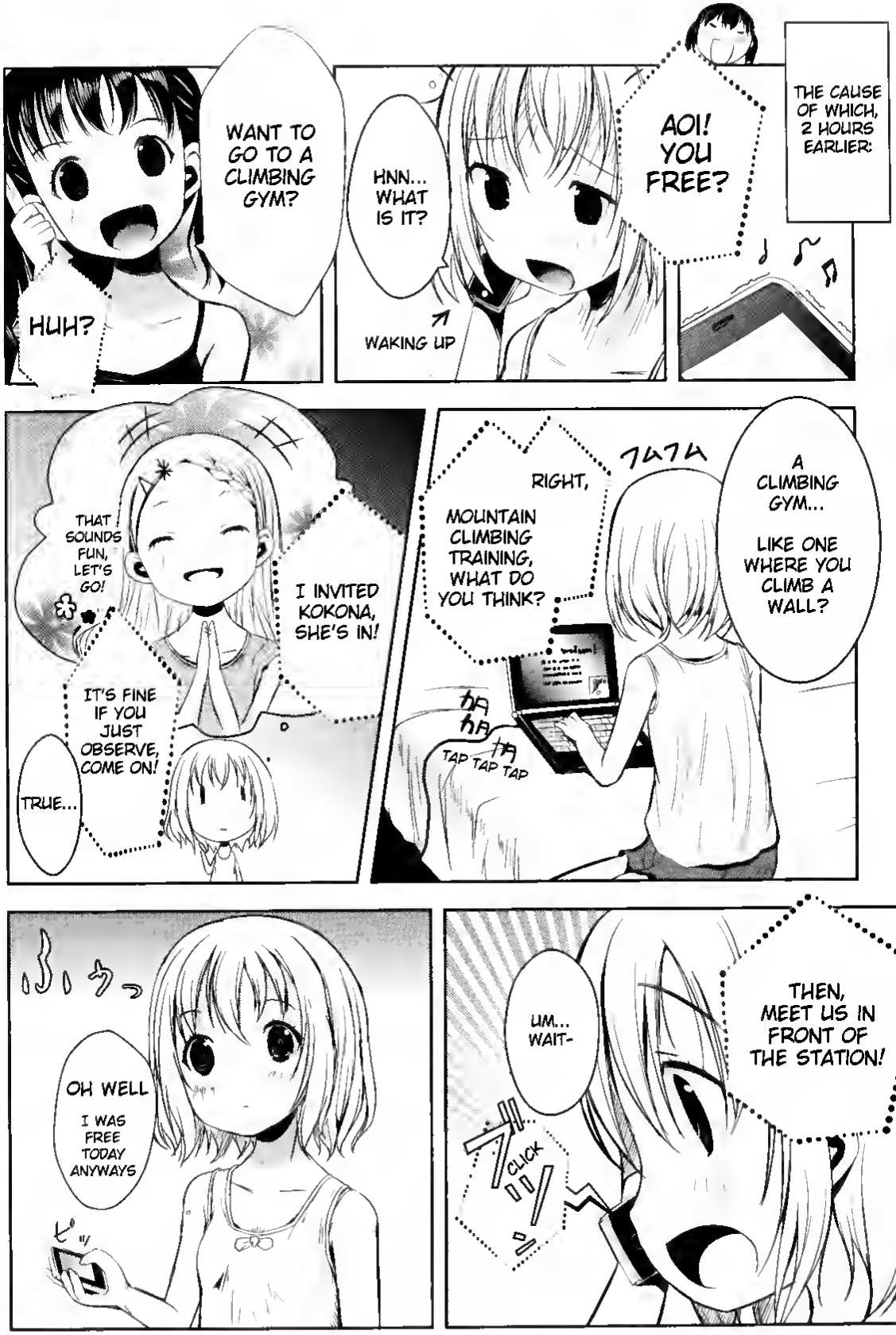
WHEN I SEE IT UP CLOSE
IT REALLY IS SCARY

BUT...


THIS WALL!
AFRAID OF HEIGHTS → IT CAN BE CLIMBED!?
THAT GIRL IS KIND OF AMAZING...

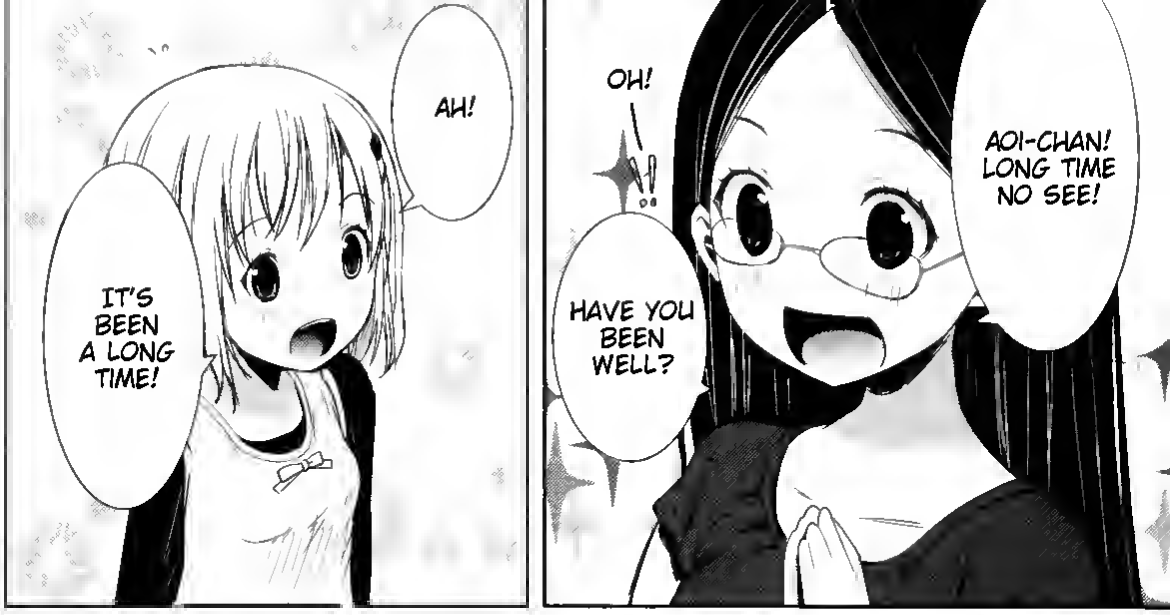
9TH CLIMB: LET'S CLIMB A WALL!

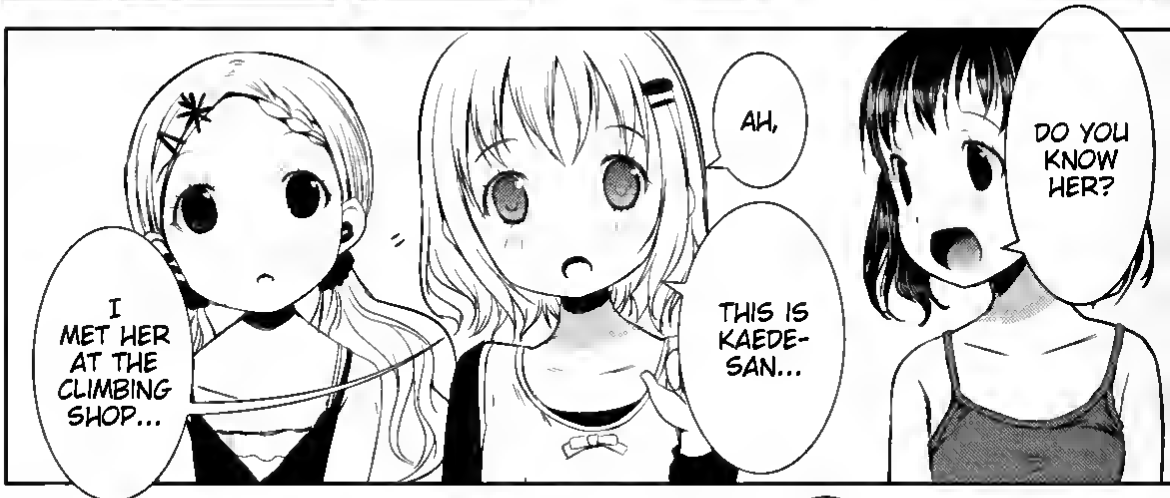
SOLO AND "PARTY" CLIMBING
YOU CAN CLIMB BY YOURSELF, GOING WHEREVER YOU LIKE (SOLO CLIMB), OR YOU CAN HAVE A CLAMOROUS CLIMB WITH OTHERS (A "PARTY" CLIMB). BOTH HAVE THEIR OWN APPEAL.

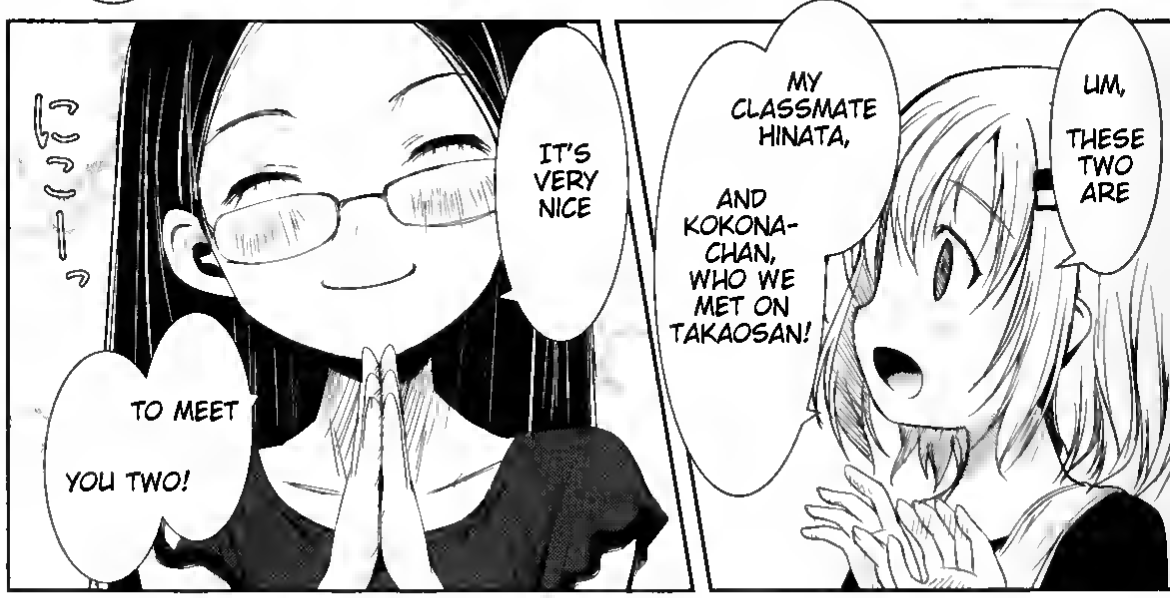

THE CAUSE OF WHICH, 2 HOURS EARLIER:
AOI! YOU FREE?
HNN... WHAT IS IT?
WAKING UP
WANT TO GO TO A CLIMBING GYM?
HUH?
A CLIMBING GYM...
LIKE ONE WHERE YOU CLIMB A WALL?
RIGHT,
MOUNTAIN CLIMBING TRAINING, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
TAP TAP TAP
I INVITED KOKONA, SHE'S IN!
THAT SOUNDS FUN, LET'S GO!
IT'S FINE IF YOU JUST OBSERVE, COME ON!
TRUE...
THEN, MEET US IN FRONT OF THE STATION!
UM... WAIT-
CLICK
OH WELL
I WAS FREE TODAY ANYWAYS

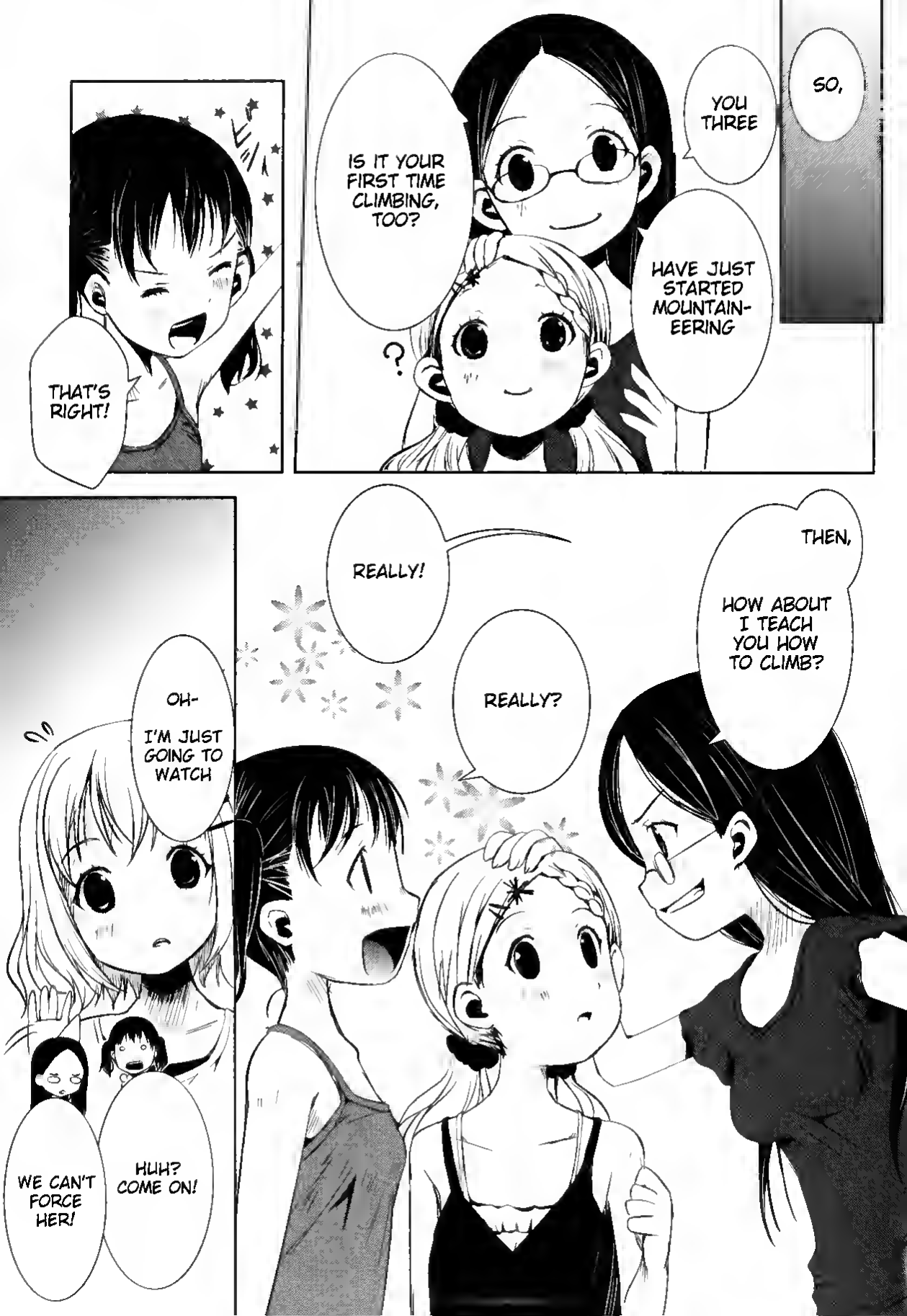
THANKS TO ENERGY CLIMBING GYM, TAKADANOBABA BRANCH

ONLY ABOUT 4M HIGH, BUT SEEMS HIGHER

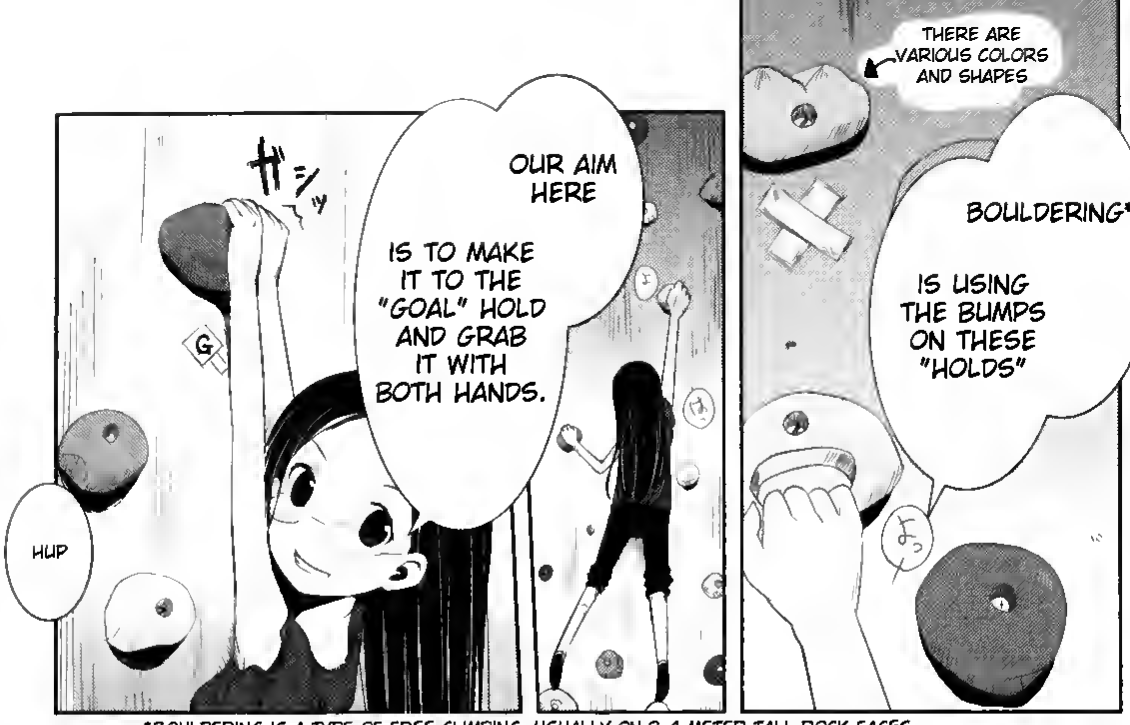

AH!
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME!
OH!
AOI-CHAN! LONG TIME NO SEE!
HAVE YOU BEEN WELL?


I MET HER AT THE CLIMBING SHOP...
AH,
THIS IS KAEDE-SAN...
DO YOU KNOW HER?

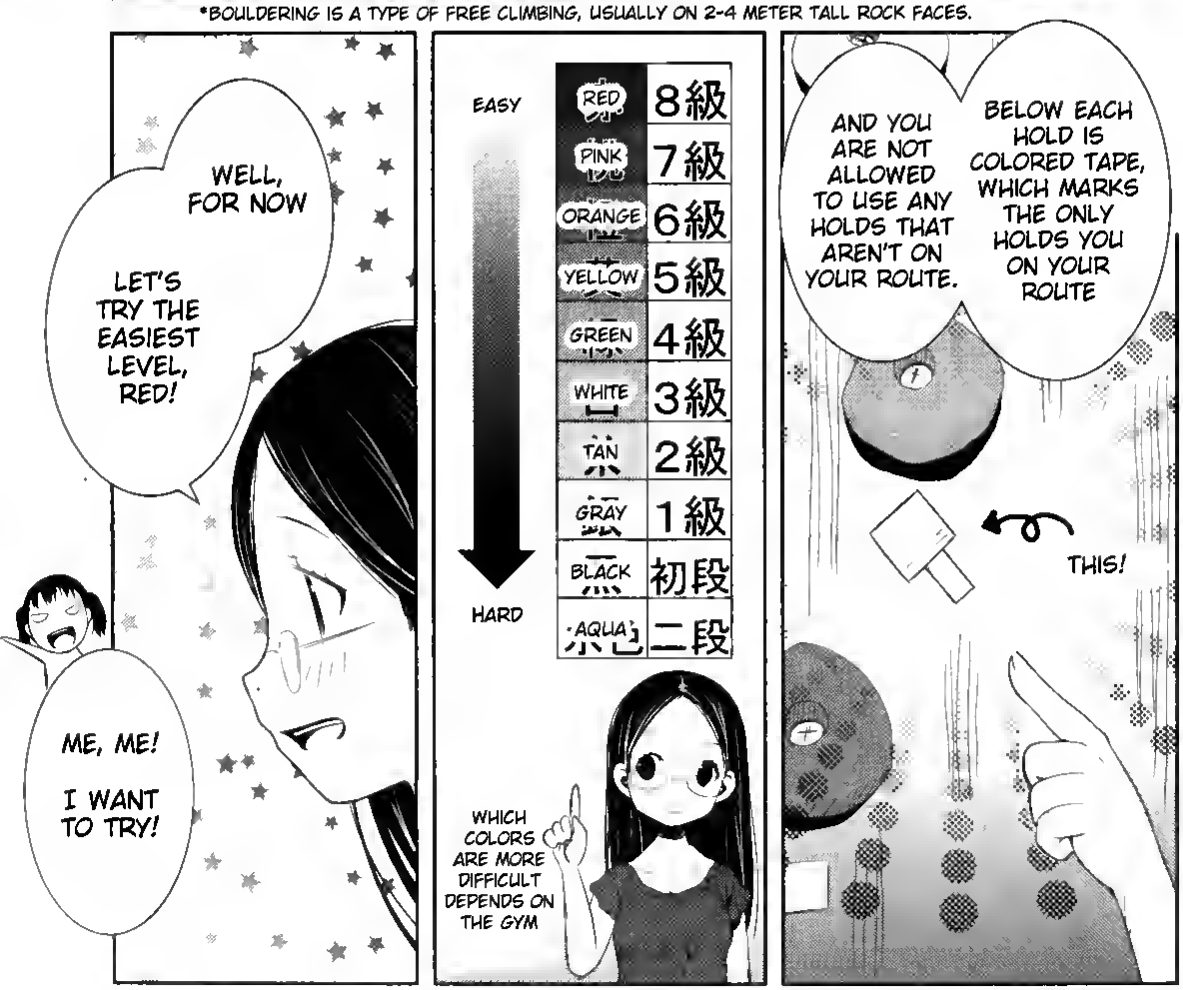

にっこー
TO MEET YOU TWO!
IT'S VERY NICE
MY CLASSMATE HINATA,
AND KOKONA-CHAN, WHO WE MET ON TAKAOSAN!
UM, THESE TWO ARE


SO,
YOU THREE
HAVE JUST STARTED MOUNTAIN-EERING
IS IT YOUR FIRST TIME CLIMBING, TOO?
?
THAT'S RIGHT!
THEN,
HOW ABOUT I TEACH YOU HOW TO CLIMB?
REALLY?
REALLY!
OH-
I'M JUST GOING TO WATCH
HUH? COME ON!
WE CAN'T FORCE HER!

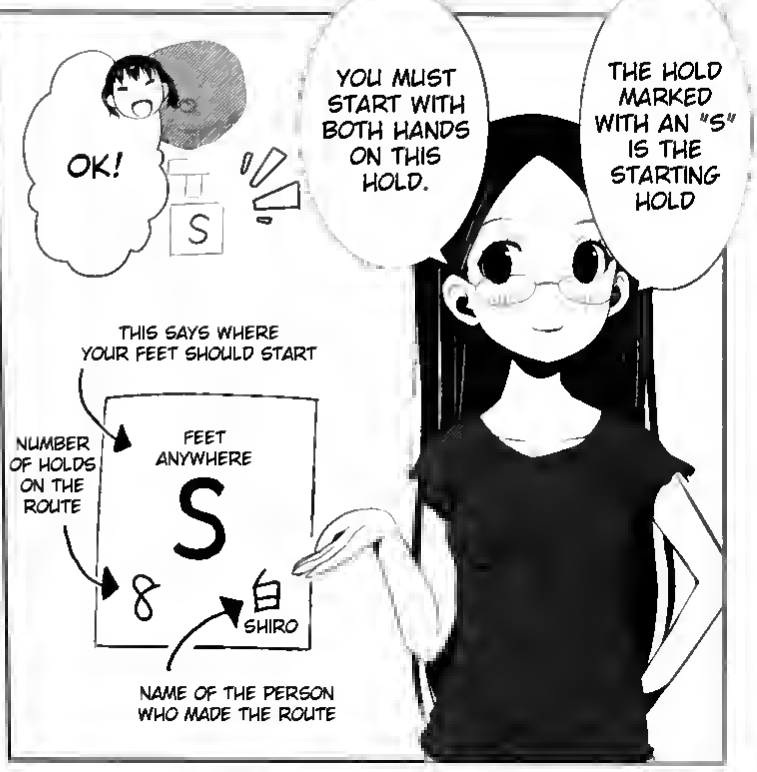
RIGHT!
ARE YOU TWO PREPARED?
YES- YES!
WELL THEN,
THE BEGINNERS CLIMBING CLASS IS NOW IN SESSION!
TO START,
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN CHALLENGE THIS WALL!


THERE ARE VARIOUS COLORS AND SHAPES
BOULDERING* IS USING THE BUMPS ON THESE "HOLDS"
OUR AIM HERE IS TO MAKE IT TO THE "GOAL" HOLD AND GRAB IT WITH BOTH HANDS.
ガシッ
HUP
G

*BOULDERING IS A TYPE OF FREE CLIMBING, USUALLY ON 2-4 METER TALL ROCK FACES.


BELOW EACH HOLD IS COLORED TAPE, WHICH MARKS THE ONLY HOLDS YOU ON YOUR ROUTE
AND YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO USE ANY HOLDS THAT AREN'T ON YOUR ROUTE.
THIS!
EASY
HARD
RED 8級
PINK 7級
ORANGE 6級
YELLOW 5級
GREEN 4級
WHITE 3級
TAN 2級
GRAY 1級
BLACK 初段
AQUA 二段
WHICH COLORS ARE MORE DIFFICULT DEPENDS ON THE GYM
WELL, FOR NOW LET'S TRY THE EASIEST LEVEL, RED!
ME, ME! I WANT TO TRY!

HUP
BALANCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN STRENGTH!
OK!


OK!
S
YOU MUST START WITH BOTH HANDS ON THIS HOLD.
THE HOLD MARKED WITH AN "S" IS THE STARTING HOLD
THIS SAYS WHERE YOUR FEET SHOULD START
NUMBER OF HOLDS ON THE ROUTE
FEET ANYWHERE
S
8
白
SHIRO
NAME OF THE PERSON WHO MADE THE ROUTE

HUP
HUP
HUP
AH, HERE? NEXT IS...
RIGHT! RIGHT AND UP!
THERE'S ONE UP AND LEFT!

WHERE NEXT?
HUH?

I DID IT!
WOW! OOH!
OOH, THAT WAS FAST...
I'M UP!
ALRIGHT, NEXT!
THAT WAS SURPRISINGLY EASY ♪
THAT WAS AMAZING!
HMM...
I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO THAT TOO...

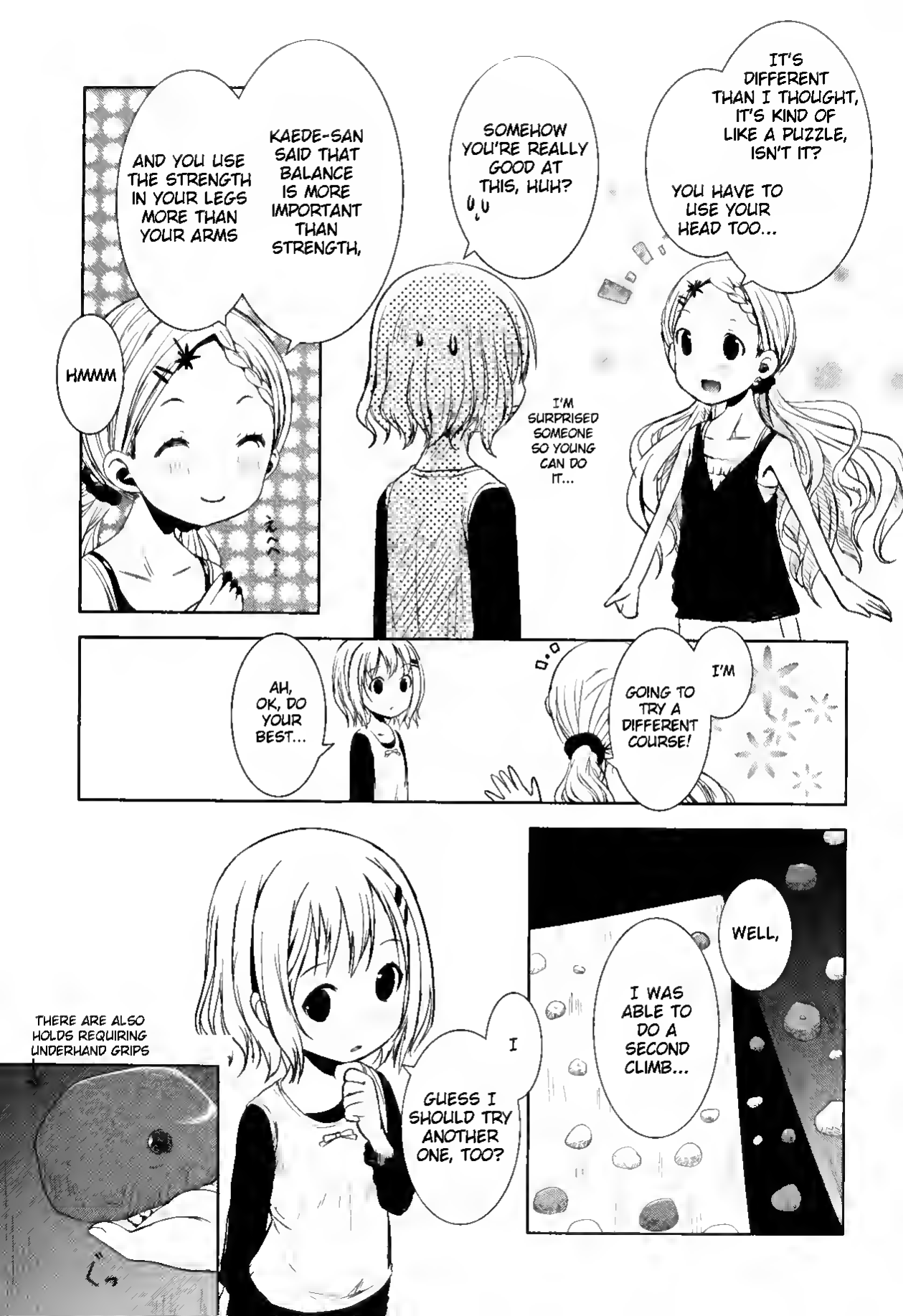
I BET I COULD CLIMB IT EVEN FASTER THAN HINATA...
HMM
HEY
AOI-CHAN, WANT TO TRY IT?
HUH!?
YOU JUST HAD A LOOK ON YOUR FACE THAT SAID YOU WANTED TO
YOU LOOKED EAGER
I... GUESS I DO...
EVEN THOUGH I'M AFRAID...

WHEN I SEE IT UP CLOSE
IT REALLY IS SCARY!
H-
ゴクリ
GULP
HERE I GO...

WHERE IS THE NEXT...
RED...
RED...
UNNSH
TWO OVER!
AH, HERE!
THAT WAY- STRETCH YOUR LEG OUT!
AH- OK!
AH
THAT'S THE
GOAL!

COME BACK DOWN SLOWLY-
O-OK
HOW WAS IT?
PRETTY FUN, RIGHT?
YES!
I DID IT...
IT WAS HARDER THAN I THOUGHT, BUT...
SHAKING
THEN, LET'S DO THE NEXT ONE!!
HUH? WAIT-
HAVE A SAFE TRIP!
LET'S DO THE NEXT LEVEL!
W-WAIT A MINUTE!

LET'S SEE IF I CAN DO ONE MORE RED TAPE ROUTE
HUP
HUP
NEXT IS
むんず!
THE GOAL
MADE IT!
GOAL!
AOI-SAN
KOKONA-CHAN!
EHEHE- I MADE IT TO MY GOAL TOO
THIS IS FUN, ISN'T IT?
IT IS...


IT'S DIFFERENT THAN I THOUGHT, IT'S KIND OF LIKE A PUZZLE, ISN'T IT?
YOU HAVE TO USE YOUR HEAD TOO...
SOMEHOW YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT THIS, HUH?
KAEDE-SAN SAID THAT BALANCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN STRENGTH,
AND YOU USE THE STRENGTH IN YOUR LEGS MORE THAN YOUR ARMS
HMMM
I'M SURPRISED SOMEONE SO YOUNG CAN DO IT...
I'M GOING TO TRY A DIFFERENT COURSE!
AH, OK, DO YOUR BEST...
WELL,
I WAS ABLE TO DO A SECOND CLIMB...
I GUESS I SHOULD TRY ANOTHER ONE, TOO?
THERE ARE ALSO HOLDS REQUIRING UNDERHAND GRIPS

USE YOUR LEGS
BALANCE... IS IMPORTANT
WOAH
IT'S HARD TO BALANCE WITH THIS
SOMEHOW, THERE AREN'T AS MANY FOOT-HOLDS?
HUH?
NEXT IS...
HURRY... IF I DON'T KEEP MOVING...
MY ARMS ARE GETTING TIRED

AND
A LITTLE MORE
MY HANDS ARE SHAKING, BUT...
HUFF
はぁぁぁ
CLEAR!
I DID IT!
WHEW
HUH?

ヒョオオオオ
HUH?
ゴクッ
GULP
I GOT THIS HIGH UP?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I'M REALLY... SCARED...

MY ARMS ARE SO TIRED...
I CAN'T MOVE THEM...
WHAT SHOULD I DO...
AOI-SAN...?
WHAT SHOULD I DO...
WHAT'S UP?
OUCH...
UM
AOI-SAN LOOKS...
UH OH...

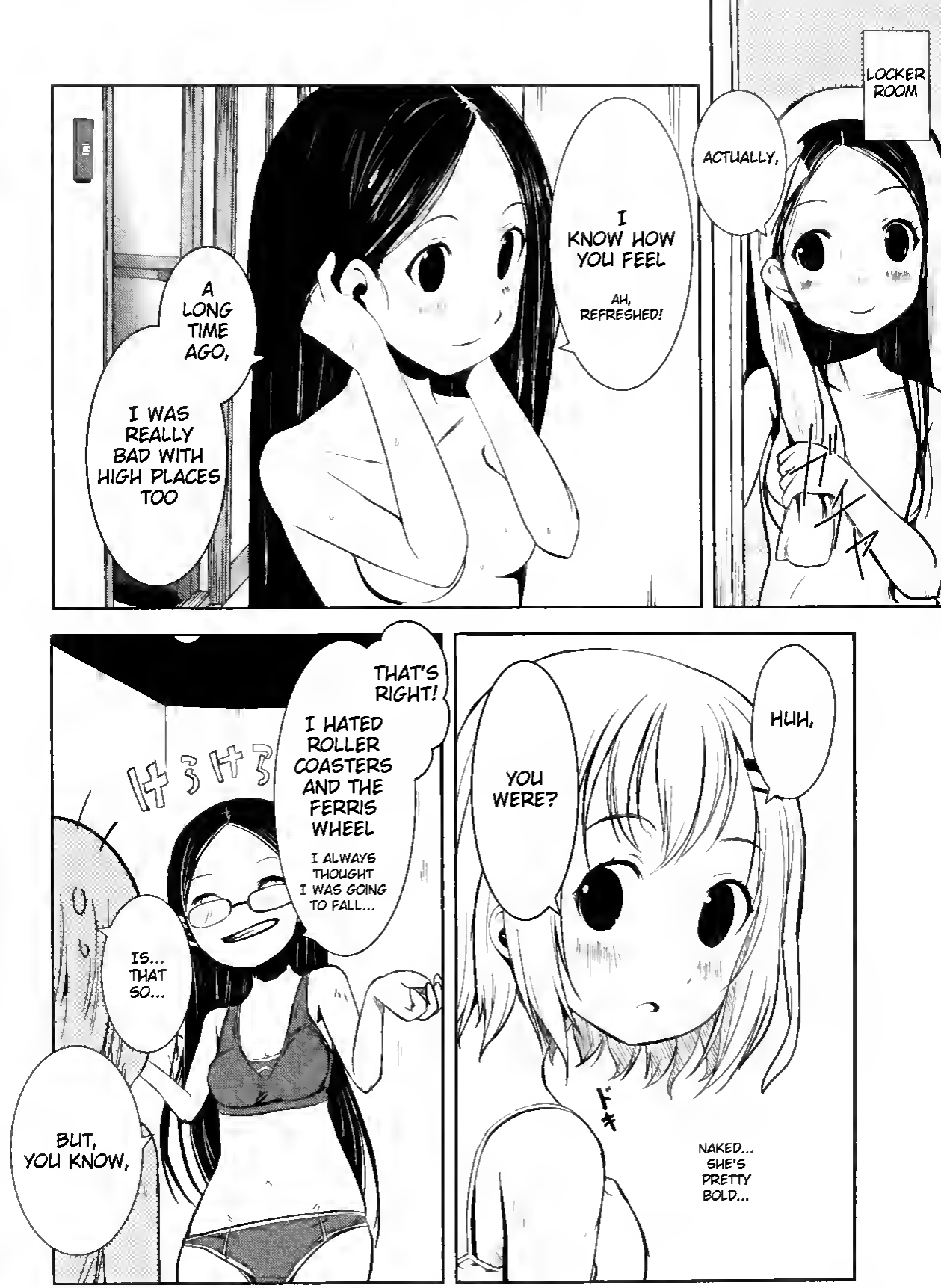
I MUST LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT RIGHT NOW

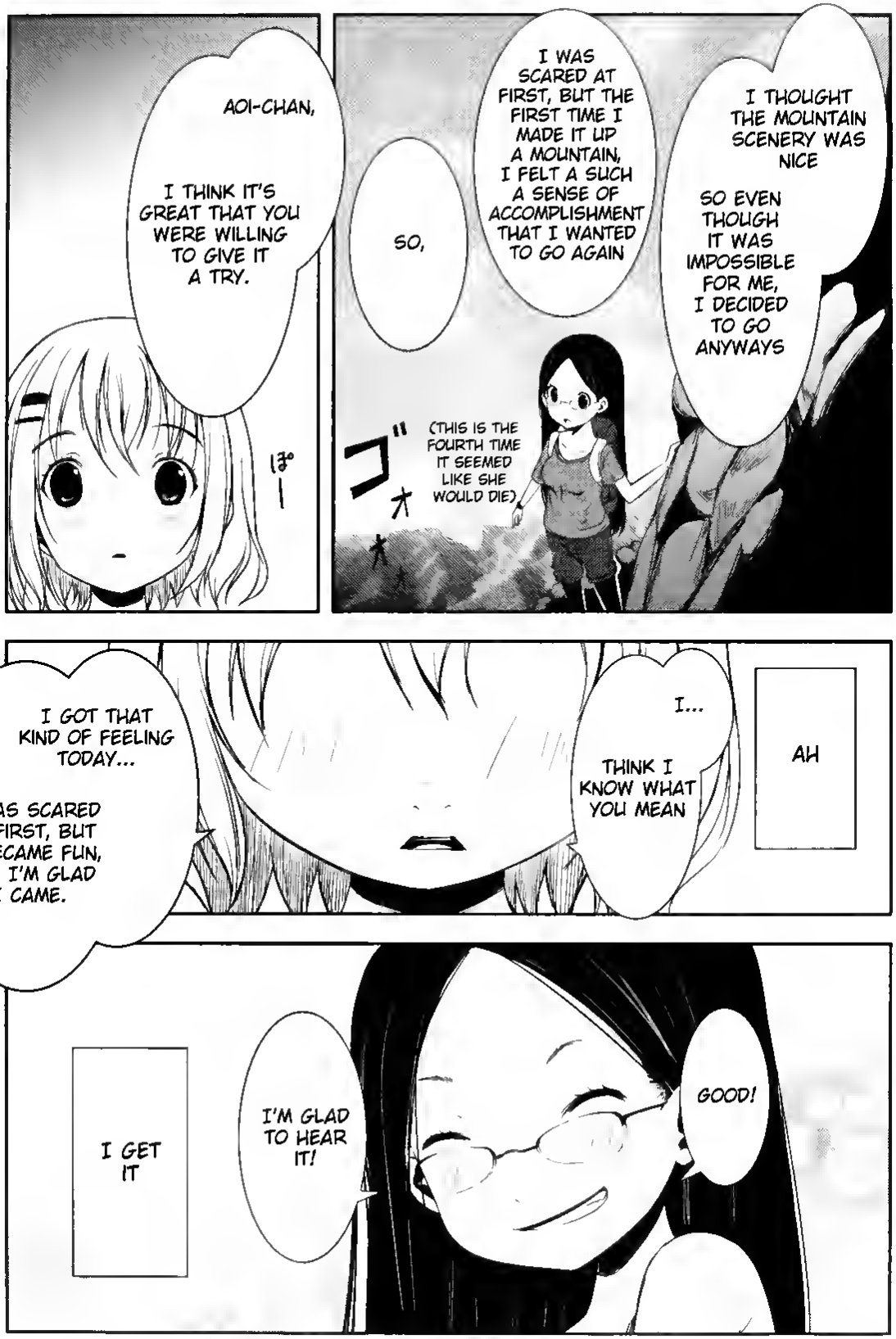
SO...

DEEP BREATH SOUNDS
I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TRUST
ぱっ
HOOO
HAAA
THAT'S RIGHT
CLENCH
きゅむ
AH
YOU CAN JUST JUMP DOWN!
THERE'S A MAT BELOW, SO YOU'LL BE FINE!
IN THINGS
OR IN PEOPLE

A-AMAZING!
YEAH
YOU DID THAT ONE?
YEAH
SHOOK UP
おろおろ
ARE YOU OK?
TH-THANKS
もじっ
UM
HMM?
YOU KNOW, HINATA
ANYTIME!

WAS THAT ALRIGHT?
AH, YES,
SOMEHOW...
I...
MORE OR LESS FINISHED THREE RED ROUTES
REALLY? THAT'S GREAT!
THIS IS PRETTY FUN
I'M GLAD THAT I TRIED IT
KAEDE-SAN...
HMM?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
FOR ALL OF YOUR HELP TODAY...
NO NO,
I DON'T MIND AT ALL!
♪
WELL,
I GUESS IT'S ABOUT TIME TO CALL IT A DAY?


LOCKER ROOM
ACTUALLY,
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL
AH, REFRESHED!
A LONG TIME AGO,
I WAS REALLY BAD WITH HIGH PLACES TOO
HUH,
YOU WERE?
ドキ
NAKED... SHE'S PRETTY BOLD...
THAT'S RIGHT!
I HATED ROLLER COASTERS AND THE FERRIS WHEEL
I ALWAYS THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO FALL...
IS... THAT SO...
BUT, YOU KNOW,


AOI-CHAN,
I THINK IT'S GREAT THAT YOU WERE WILLING TO GIVE IT A TRY.
ほー
SO,
I WAS SCARED AT FIRST, BUT THE FIRST TIME I MADE IT UP A MOUNTAIN, I FELT A SUCH A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT I WANTED TO GO AGAIN
I THOUGHT THE MOUNTAIN SCENERY WAS NICE
SO EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME, I DECIDED TO GO ANYWAYS
ゴ
(THIS IS THE FOURTH TIME IT SEEMED LIKE SHE WOULD DIE)
I GOT THAT KIND OF FEELING TODAY...
I WAS SCARED AT FIRST, BUT IT BECAME FUN, AND I'M GLAD I CAME.
I...
THINK I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN
AH
I GET IT
I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT!
GOOD!

AND IT... MADE ME REALLY HAPPY...

MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS COLUMN

WHERE THE AUTHOR PERSONALLY COMMENTS ON EACH KEY ITEM!

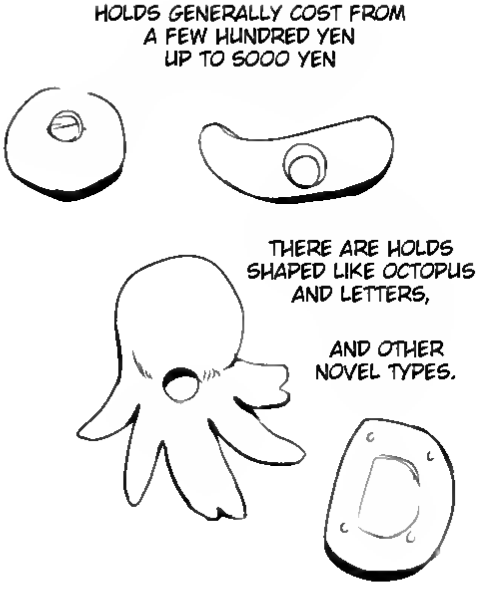
BOULDERING GYM

A BOULDERING GYM IS A PLACE THAT SIMULATES ROCK CLIMBING INDOORS.

WHILE YOU MAY THINK YOU CAN RELY ON STRENGTH FOR ROCK CLIMBING, THIS IS A SPORT THAT, SURPRISINGLY, YOU WILL NEED TO USE YOUR HEAD MORE THAN YOUR BODY. YOU MUST GET TO THE TOP BEFORE YOUR STRENGTH GIVES OUT, BUT WHILE YOU EXERT YOUR BODY CLIMBING, EVEN THE EASIEST COURSES ARE A PUZZLE THAT YOU NEED TO SOLVE IN ORDER TO CLIMB TO THE TOP.

YOUR FIRST TIME WILL BE ABOUT 2-3 HOURS, AND COST AROUND 2000 YEN FOR ENTRY, PLUS THE RENTAL FEES FOR CLIMBING SHOES AND A CHALK BAG (TO KEEP YOUR HANDS FROM GETTING SWEATY), UNLESS YOU HAVE YOUR OWN GEAR. A SURPRISINGLY LARGE NUMBER OF BOULDERING GYMS EXIST ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THEM.

HOW ABOUT YOU LOOK AROUND NEAR YOU AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIND ONE?


HOLDS GENERALLY COST FROM
A FEW HUNDRED YEN
UP TO 5000 YEN
THERE ARE HOLDS
SHAPED LIKE OCTOPUS
AND LETTERS,
AND OTHER
NOVEL TYPES.